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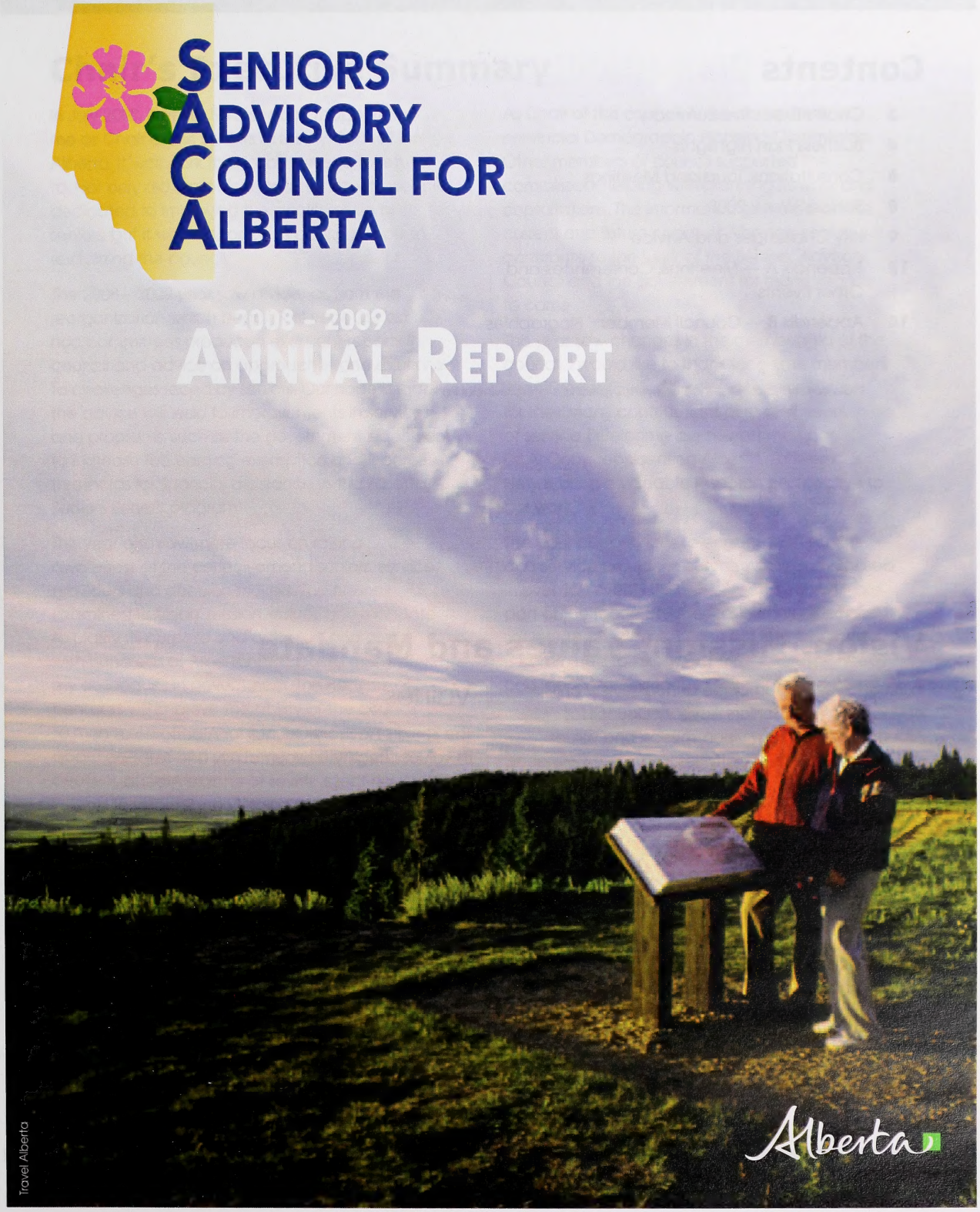
SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

2008 - 2009

ANNUAL REPORT



Travel Alberta

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Main cover photo: Horseshoe Canyon, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

Vision, Mission, Values and Mandate

In 2008 – 2009, as part of the annual review of its business plan, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta adopted new vision, mission and values statement to guide its activities:

Vision

To increase the recognition of seniors as one of Alberta's most respected and valuable resources.

Mission

Consult with seniors, seniors' organizations and others to gather information and provide advice to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports regarding seniors' needs.

Values

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta holds as its values integrity, accountability and respect, and, through these, strives to enable Alberta seniors to maintain their dignity and quality of life.

Mandate

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta serves as a communication link between Alberta's seniors and the Government of Alberta. The council consults with seniors and also provides information to seniors and government. Through collaboration, the council strives to assist seniors to live life to the fullest.

Chair's Executive Summary

In July 2008, Premier Ed Stelmach reappointed me as Chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. It was work that I was pleased to return to. Not only did it allow me to interact with people dedicated to improving the quality of life of seniors, but it was a chance to continue work in revitalizing the council.

The 2008 – 2009 year saw dividends from the reorganization which began last year. Our ad hoc committees produced excellent reports for council and advice on approaches and solutions to challenges faced by seniors. Our hope is that the advice will lead to improvements in services and programs, such as the government's decision to increase the earning exemption and income thresholds for financial assistance in the Alberta Seniors Benefit program.

This year also saw more focus on raising awareness of the council among seniors, service providers and decision makers. The council examined its vision, mission, values and mandate to clarify its purpose and activities, and met with hundreds of Albertans, including many of my colleagues in government. This network of contacts will improve the ability of the council to monitor trends relevant to seniors and to learn about creative and promising solutions to the challenges they face.

As Chair of this council, I also chaired the provincial Demographic Planning Commission. Other members of council supported the commission, helping with planning its work and consultations. The information gathered on the current and future needs of Alberta's seniors will contribute to the work of the Seniors' Advisory Council and the government for many years to come.

This year saw changes in the membership of the council. I would like to thank long-time members Jean Dreger, Clyde Elford and Leonard Olson for their many contributions over their years of service. I welcome our newest member, Dr. Al Cook, representing Alberta's universities. He will bring a valuable research perspective to our work.

The council continues to engage with seniors and service providers: our members participated in over 150 events this year. Alberta's seniors are part of the fabric of Alberta's communities and society. The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta is committed to bringing their challenges, needs and ideas forward to the Government of Alberta.

Sincerely,

George VanderBurg, MLA
Chair

Business Plan Highlights

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta business plan sets out three goals:

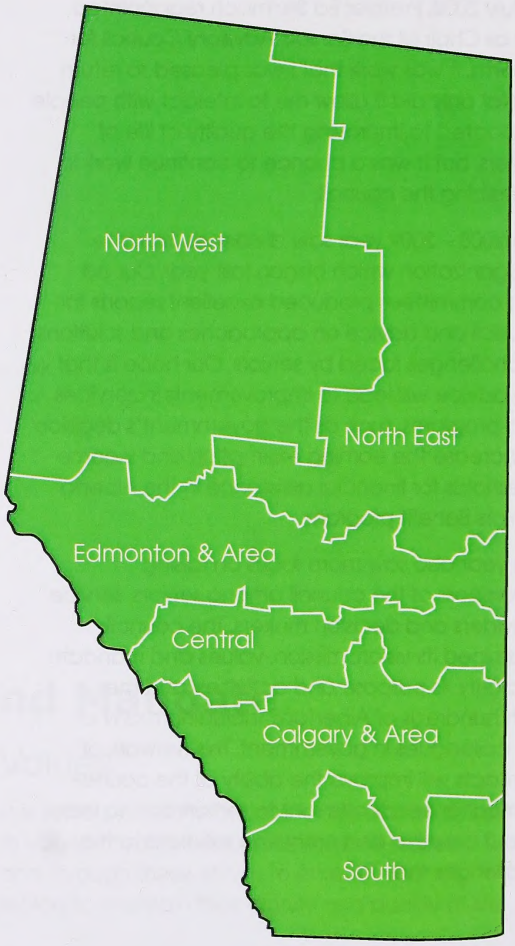
- to improve the focus and work of the council;
- to identify and understand successful national and international non-academic programs, services, and legislation that will help improve the lives of Alberta seniors; and
- to improve awareness of the council.

Improving the Awareness of the Council

Members develop a provincial perspective on one or more areas of seniors' needs and concerns and bring those needs and concerns forward at council meetings. To do this, the council divides itself into a number of ad hoc committees; accommodation, elder abuse, medical studies, university studies, transportation and diversity. Members of the council are members of one or more of these committees, they work with two or three other members to focus concerns and develop advice for consideration by the whole council.

As members of the ad hoc committees, council members participated in seminars and government consultations on topics ranging from elder abuse to demographic planning to health care skill development. Council members participated in about 25 conferences, forums, seminars and workshops to learn about research, policies and programs relevant to seniors.

Each member also acts as a voice for the challenges and activities of seniors and service providers in the region they represent. Council members have identified and continue to meet with municipal providers of seniors services in their respective regions. They visited seniors'



residences and community organizations to gather information on the challenges facing seniors and local solutions to those challenges, and to increase awareness of the council's activities and government programs.

This year, council members conducted about 50 facility visits to gather information on seniors needs and provide information on the council

and government programs. Council developed a new facility debriefing form to improve the quality of information gathered during facility visits.

In addition, the council strives to keep abreast of initiatives the Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports is considering and to follow-up on the advice it provides to the Minister. This year, the council requested and received an environmental scan of policy initiatives undertaken by the Ministry. It also briefs the Minister following each quarterly council meeting and on an ad hoc basis as appropriate.

Identifying Successful National Non-Academic Programs, Services and Legislation

The council recognizes that solutions to seniors' needs successfully adopted elsewhere may be adapted or recommended to government as solutions to current or potential seniors' issues in Alberta. Each ad hoc committee receives and reviews reports from across Canada on matters that fall within their mandates.

This year, the National Seniors Advisory Council held round tables across Canada on low-income seniors. A member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta participated in the roundtable in Alberta. The *Report of the National Seniors Council on Low Income Among Seniors* was released in February 2009.

Improving Awareness of the Council

A key focus of this year's work by council members was to raise awareness of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and its work among those stakeholders concerned with seniors and seniors' issues, as well as provincial and municipal decision makers.

To support this work, the council completed a rebranding initiative to increase recognition and identification of the council. Members met with Members of the Legislative Assembly and constituency office personnel to increase their awareness of the role and mandate of the council and hosted a networking reception at the annual Seniors' Services Conference. Council members attended more than 40 meetings and networking events to increase awareness of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and its activities and to strengthen relationships with service providers and decision-makers.

In addition, council developed new vision, mission and values statements to provide greater clarity around the goals and purpose of the council and developed the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Mandate and Roles document.

Consultations, Tours and Meetings

Members of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta share information and gather feedback by:

- hosting consultations and quarterly meetings throughout the province;
- working closely with seniors and seniors' organizations in their communities; and
- touring seniors' facilities (i.e., housing, long-term care facilities and seniors' centres).

Public Consultations and Tours

On June 16 and 17, 2008, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta held a public consultation and facility tours in the Vegreville region.

Representatives of local governments and seniors' clubs, advocacy groups and service providers, as well as local seniors, participated in the consultation session on June 16.

- Participants applauded the availability of housing options offering different levels of care, from lodges to Alzheimer care, and access to supportive services, including home care, seniors' centres and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).
- At the same time, participants identified several challenges, including: access to transportation; the need to expand and renovate existing housing and concern about the impact of Alberta's rising cost of living on seniors. Participants also noted staff shortages, difficulty in finding volunteers and challenges related to providing specialty services.
- Potential solutions to the challenges focused on partnerships between the provincial government and local municipal housing and health authorities.

On June 17, council members toured nine seniors' centres and housing facilities in Vegreville, Myrnam, Lamont and Two Hills.

The facilities tour focused on obtaining local information related to:

- what is working well;
- the facilities' links with the community;
- the challenges or barriers service providers would like resolved; and
- advice for the council and the Government of Alberta.

Local service providers take pride in their efforts to recognize, hire and train staff to meet the needs of care facility residents and in programs to meet seniors' recreation and health needs. There were many examples of good links with health services. Seniors' facilities and agencies received good community support.

At the same time, most facilities face two major challenges: difficulty in recruiting staff and attracting volunteers, and a need to update and expand facilities to meet the needs of residents and accommodate increased demand for seniors' housing. Seniors in communities face challenges in keeping up with the increasing costs of living in Alberta.

Service providers called for increases in financial support for seniors, such as increased benefits, higher thresholds for programs, subsidies for utilities and elimination of education taxes. They also called for more flexibility in facility funding.

Quarterly Meetings

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta meets on a quarterly basis. This year, the council met in June, September, December and February. Each meeting lasted a full day and involved presentations by the subcommittees on accommodation, elder abuse, medical studies, transportation, diversity and university studies. As well, submissions on other topics of interest and presentations on initiatives relevant to seniors were heard.

This year, council heard presentations from:

- The Chair of the Premier's Advisory Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Styner, highlighted issues that seniors and disabled Albertans have in common and the opportunities for the councils to work together; and
- Chi Loo, Assistant Deputy Minister of Seniors Services Division, Seniors and Community Supports, who presented the findings of the Demographic Planning Commission.

Ongoing Consultations with Seniors and Seniors Service Providers

In addition to the consultations and tours initiated by the council, individual members attended 156 other meetings, conferences, facility visits and events during the year to network and share information. Appendix A provides a full list of the organizations the council members met with during the year.

Seniors' Week 2008

Since 1986, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta has led the celebration of Seniors' Week. Events throughout the week:

- recognize and honour seniors;
- highlight the positive contributions that seniors are making to their communities; and
- promote healthy attitudes about aging and seniors.

From June 2 to 8, 2008, communities across Alberta celebrated "Our Seniors—Building a Stronger Alberta." The theme reflected the active role that seniors play in making our province a better place to live, in addition to their contributions in the past. The week was launched with an event at the Calgary Zoo attended by Seniors and Community Supports Minister Mary Anne Jablonski, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta chair and MLA for Whitecourt – Ste. Anne, George VanderBurg, representatives of the City of Calgary and about 1,500 people.

Several communities held events to honour seniors, from barbeques to educational forums to talents shows. Seniors' Week continues to be well-received and celebrated by municipalities and seniors' service providers. Council members attended several of these events and celebrations.

Key Challenges and Advice

Through their tours of facilities, meetings with service providers and participation in various meetings and conferences, members of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta hear about the major challenges facing our aging population as well as community solutions that are working well. Based on what it hears, the council provides advice to the Government of Alberta, through the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, with the goal of improving the quality of life of Alberta seniors.

This section of the Annual Report summarizes the advice council drafted in response to challenges and solutions that seniors and seniors' service providers raised during the past year.

Accommodation

- The Minister is encouraged to discuss with the Minister of Municipal Affairs the development of minimum standards for provincial and municipal planning to accommodate the needs of seniors.

  Discussion: There is a need for minimum standards, and possibly legislative changes, regarding municipal and provincial planning to accommodate seniors. This would encompass all programs, not just housing.

- The Minister is encouraged to discuss with the Minister of Health and Wellness the example of Seniors and Community Supports providing a public and transparent audit of standards relating to long-term care.

  Discussion: The Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports has created an Internet-accessible audit of supportive living facilities within its mandate that allows seniors, their families or care givers to review the licence status, inspection results and complaints for each facility. This information helps them to make informed decisions about accommodations and enhances the safety, security and quality of life provided at each facility. A similar service for the facilities under the mandate of Alberta Health and Wellness would create a seamless system encompassing all levels of accommodation and care.

Benefit programs

- The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports is encouraged to consider increasing the qualifying income thresholds for Alberta Seniors Benefits to $25,000 for a single senior and $40,000 for couples.

  Discussion: All Albertans face increases in the costs of living. Many of the increases are for necessities—such as energy and utilities, rents or property taxes, and food. For people on fixed incomes, like seniors, dealing with increased costs is difficult. Seniors benefit programs need to be adjusted to reflect the increased cost of living in the province.

Medical services

- The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports is encouraged to discuss with the Minister of Health and Wellness the feasibility of the development of "clinical decisions units" for seniors inside active treatment hospitals, where they can stay overnight when it is necessary to complete medical testing the next day.

  Discussion: For many seniors, needed medical tests and services are not available within their home communities. This necessitates travel, in some cases over significant distances. For seniors whose tests take more than one day, multiple trips to services and home incur both costs and stress. In addition, if those seniors are residents of long-term care facilities, the costs are borne by the facilities. Providing units where seniors can stay overnight to complete required tests is one way to reduce transportation costs and stress on seniors. It may also be a more cost-effective way to provide access to medical services.

Transportation

- The Chair of the council discuss with the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports alternatives to ambulance services for long-term care centres, and encourage the Minister to raise the matter with the Minister of Health and Wellness.

  Discussion: Ambulance costs are high, imposing a burden on seniors and institutions. Often, facilities call ambulances to attend to situations where the service is not necessary. Alternative-to-ambulance services are beginning to offer non-emergency transportation services in some areas, at much lower costs. In addition, use of these services can free-up ambulances for emergency or high medical needs situations.

Communication

- The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports is encouraged to work with her ministry staff and government colleagues to evaluate communication with seniors, ensuring it is effective, and make changes as needed.

  Discussion: Seniors are looking for simple, clear explanations and, often, a person to call or see that can assist them. They face challenges related to forms, knowledge about the topic and where to get help when needed. There is a need for ongoing, improved communication that recognizes the needs of seniors and those approaching age 65. Evaluations should consider what is working, what is not, and why.

  Information is designed as part of a management system, but seniors do not know how to use this information. There is a need to look at alternative ways to get information to seniors.

- The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports is encouraged to consider adding links related to services and programs for seniors, as well as community-based innovative and creative services and programming for seniors, to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta webpage.

  Discussion: The addition of links to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta home page would make it an effective access point for seniors looking for information on government and community programs and services.

Appendix A — Meetings, Conferences and Other Events

This Appendix details council members' commitment to meet with groups or attend events throughout the province during the last year. Council members visited 43 communities and participated in 156 meetings and events over the past 12 months. Primarily, council members visited facilities, attended events and made presentations. They also attended conferences and meetings on elder abuse and transportation.

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Airdrie	Rob Anderson, MLA	Discussion of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors' issues
Ardrossan	20th Annual Seniors Jamboree	Networking and information gathering
Black Diamond	Rising Sun Long Term Care	Facility tour and information gathering
	High Country Seniors Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
Blackie	Rising Sun Long Term Care	Facility tour and information gathering
Brooks	Arno Doerksen, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors' issues
	Brooks Hospital – long term care	Facility tour and information gathering
Calgary	Millrise Place Daily Assisted Living	Facility tour and information gathering
	Intercare Millrise	Facility tour and information gathering
	Chinese Catholic Society – Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Networking
	Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta	Seniors' Week Kick-off
	Marlborough Park Community Centre	Seniors' Week celebration
	Kyle Fawcett, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	Seminar on elder abuse
	Action Group on Elder Abuse	Seminar on elder abuse
	Teresa Woo-Paw, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
	Bordeaux Development Corporation	Community discussion and visit
	Manmeet Singh Bhullar, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
	Bowmont Seniors Assistance Association — North West Outreach for Older Adults	Information gathering
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and Downtown Friendship Centre	Multiculturalism Day celebration

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Calgary continued	Jonathan Denis, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
	Forrest Lawn Library	Introduction of pilot project
	Chinook Care Centre	Facility tour and information gathering
	Father Lacombe Care Centre	Facility tour and information gathering
	Mayfair Nursing Home	Facility tour and information gathering
	Multicultural Seniors Society of Alberta	Networking
	Confederation Park Senior Citizen Centre	Information gathering - community
	The Westview	Facility tour and information gathering
	Homefront	Networking, discussions
	Calgary Homeless Foundation	Meeting
	Sunnyhill Wellness Centre	Visit, viewing and meeting
	Calgary FCSS, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary Chinese Association	Information gathering
	Marlborough Mall	Seniors Information Fair
	Alberta Council on Aging and Government of Canada	Grant information session
	Canadian Hispanic Society and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Corn Festival
	McKenzie Towne Centre Care Agency	Information gathering
	The Beverly Centre	Information gathering
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Immigrant Seniors Award Review Committee meeting
	Northwest Multi-Cultural Society	Meeting
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	Seniors Services Conference
	Calgary Police Service	Meeting re elder abuse
	Intercare Millrise Place	Facility tour and information gathering
	Millrise Long Term Care	Facility tour and information gathering
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Awards ceremony
	Alliance to End Violence	Conference
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Awards ceremony
	City of Calgary	Meeting with Alderman Bob Hawkesworth
	Tarador Investments—Rural Retirement Community Development	Meeting
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Meeting
	Foothills County Hospice Society	Facility tour and information gathering

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Calgary continued	Whitehorn Village Seniors Residence	Facility tour and information gathering
	Eldernet Calgary	Networking
	Varsity Seniors Association	Facility tour and information gathering
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Networking
	McKenzie Towne Centre Care Agency	Networking and material distribution
	Calgary Chinese Elder Citizen Association and Alliance to End Violence	Information session re elder abuse
	Alliance to End Violence	Networking
	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Networking dinner
	Pet Access League Society	Networking and information gathering
	Nature & Nurture Services for Seniors	Networking
	Kerby Centre Grocery Delivery Program	Networking and gathering information
	Carewell Recreation for Seniors	Networking
	Comfort Keepers	Networking
	Calgary Dollars	Networking
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	Seniors Services Conference
Drayton Valley	Drayton Valley-Calmar constituency	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
Edmonton	Alberta Emergency Management Agency	Review of curriculum for personal emergency preparedness for seniors
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	Elder abuse forum
	Rural Palliative-End of Life Care Symposium	Symposium on palliative care and related research
	Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council	Seminar – Mobilizing for Action: Culturally Responsive Pathways for Isolated Immigrant Seniors
	Alberta Council on Aging Annual Meeting	Networking
	Demographic Planning Commission	Planning
	Demographic Planning Commission (two meetings)	Information gathering
	Public Interest Alberta, Parkland Institute, Friends of Medicare	Forum on future of senior care in Alberta
	Alberta Centre on Aging	Information gathering
	Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital	Symposium on Geriatric Psychiatry

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Edmonton continued	Alberta Health and Wellness	News conference – announcement of Alberta Pharmaceutical Strategy
	Alberta Health and Wellness	Health Care Aide Skill Development Quality Improvement Initiative Steering Committee
	Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council	Workshop on age-friendly communities
	Jewish Drop-in Centre	Meeting and networking
	Seniors Information Services Office	Meeting
	Westend Seniors Activity Centre	Workshop
Elk Point	Elk Point Heritage Lodge	Accommodation review
	Alberta Council on Aging	Community meeting
Fort McLeod	Evan Berger, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
Fort Saskatchewan	Constituency Office – Premier Stelmach	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
Fox Creek	Fox Creek Seniors	Information gathering
Grande Cache	Whispering Pines Seniors Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
	Grande Cache FCSS	Networking
Grande Prairie	Peace Health and Wellness Committee	Information gathering
Grimshaw	Grimshaw Seniors Centre	Information gathering
High Prairie	Big Lake FCSS	Seniors information workshop
	Big Lakes FCSS	Networking
	Big Lake FCSS	Networking
	Town of High Prairie	Networking
High River	High River Hospital and Long Term Care	Facility tour and information gathering
	Medicine Tree Place and Westwinds Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	High River Long Term Care	Facility tour and information gathering
Highwood	George Groeneveld, MLA	Discussion of Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and seniors issues
Innisfail	Seniors Serenadors – Seniors Centres Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
Leduc	Alberta Health and Wellness	HCA Initiative Steering Committee meeting
Lethbridge	Seniors and Community Supports	Forum on elder abuse
	National Seniors Advisory Council	Round table on low income seniors
	Public Interest Alberta	Forum on the future of senior care in Alberta
Little Smoky	Little Smoky Seniors	Information gathering

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Lloydminster	Public Interest Alberta	Forum on the future of senior care in Alberta
Medicine Hat	Public Interest Alberta, Parkland Institute, Friends of Medicare	Forum on future of senior care in Alberta
Mundare	Lamont County FCSS	Seniors appreciation event
Myrnam	Two Hills FCSS, East Central Health and Two Hills County Adult Learning Council	Information sharing
Nanton	Mosquito Creek Foundation – Silver Willow Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
	Silver Willow Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
Okotoks	Foothill Country Hospice Society (two visits)	Facility tour and information gathering
	Sandstone Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
Pincher Creek	Pincher Creek Seniors Coffee Group – Seniors Centre	Information gathering
Provost	Provost and District FCSS	Seniors fair
St. Albert	St. Albert Demographic Survey Committee	Information sharing
St. Paul	St. Paul Seniors' Club	Information sharing
	St. Paul Extendicare	Facility tour and information gathering
	Alberta Health and Wellness and Seniors and Community Supports	Caregiver community consultation
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	Senior Services Workshop
Sherwood Park	Seniors Management Services and Pioneer Housing Foundation	Information gathering – discussion of concerns of seniors in community
	Country Cottage Seniors Residence	Presentation by Arthritis Society
	Strathcona County Council	Focus group discussion
	Strathcona County Council	Meeting
Slave Lake	Lesser Slave Lake Regional Housing Authority	Facility tour and information gathering
	Vanterwell Heritage Place	Facility tour and information gathering
	Town of Slave Lake	Information gathering and networking
Spring Bank	Rural Seniors Advisory Council	Meeting
Spruce Grove	Spruce Grove and area FCSS	Building seniors information network seminar
Standoff	Blood Reserve Health Centre and Nursing Home	Facility tour and information gathering

Location	Facility/ Organization	Reason for Visit
Stony Plain	United Church Women's Association	Attend meeting - health and housing
	Stony Plain FCSS	Meeting
	Stony Plain FCSS	Open house
	Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Yellowhead Region	Workshop
	Westview Health Centre	Conference
Strathmore	Strathmore Continuing Care	Facility tour and information gathering
Turner Valley	Valley Neighbours Club	Networking
Vegreville	Zone 7 Alberta Senior Citizens Sports and Recreation Association	Information gathering
	Vegreville Senior Citizens Sunshine Club	Networking
	Lions Golden Villa	Facility tour and information gathering
	Parkview Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	St. Anne's Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville Constituency	Meeting
	St. Michael's Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	Points West Living & Century Park	Facility tour and information gathering
Vermilion	Vermilion Valley Lodge	Facility tour and information gathering
	Parkway Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	Westend Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	Valley View Manor	Facility tour and information gathering
	Pioneer Haven	Facility tour and information gathering
Villeneuve	West Country Hearth	Meeting, discussion of seniors' issues

Appendix B — Council Members' Biographies

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta is a government-appointed body. The Premier appoints the Chair, a Member of the Legislative Assembly; the government appoints other members by Order-in-Council. They include representatives of the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta's universities and the six regions of the province. This regional structure, developed by the Seniors Advisory Council in 1997, maximizes the resources of the council.

In 2008 – 2009, the 13 members of the council were:

George VanderBurg, Chair

MLA, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne

George VanderBurg was appointed Chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta by the Premier in January 2007. He was elected to his first term as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne in March 2001 and re-elected in November 2004 and March 2008.

He was appointed Minister of Government Services in April 2006 and acting Minister of Innovation and Science in August 2006. He held both positions until December 2006.

He has also served on several provincial committees, as the Director of the Northlands Park Board and as Chair of the Electrical Transmission Commission.

Prior to becoming the MLA for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne in 2001, George served for 15 years in municipal politics. He served as the Mayor of Whitecourt for almost nine years and spent six years as a town councillor.

Over the years, Mr. VanderBurg and his wife were successful owners and operators of various businesses in northern Alberta. He was President of the Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce and was recipient of the Chamber of Commerce President's Award. Mr. VanderBurg has also been named Whitecourt's Citizen of the Year and awarded the Alberta Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award.

Diana Anderson, Member

Elk Point, North East Region

Diana Anderson has spent most of her career working to improve the quality of life for seniors and to dispel myths about aging.

Ms. Anderson was the President of the Alberta Council on Aging and chaired the policy advisory and health committees. She has also served on the Lakeland Health Authority board and on the steering committee to implement accommodation standards for supportive living facilities.

Ms. Anderson has developed outreach programs for long-term care residents, worked with pastoral care groups and taught post-graduate courses in gerontology. She currently leads a program that brings youth and seniors together.

Her community service was recognized with the awarding of an Alberta Centennial Medal.

Ms. Anderson became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2007.

Rosemarie Biggs, Member

Sherwood Park, Edmonton and Area Region

Rosemarie Biggs was a community pharmacist when she started a home visit program for seniors. She used her prescription deliveries as an opportunity to discuss their medications and how to take them properly with seniors.

Her community and professional involvement includes serving as president of the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association in 1996. She was re-elected as the association's president in 1998.

Mrs. Biggs has also spoken nationally and internationally and has received several awards in recognition of her work. The awards include the Canadian Pharmacists' Association's Pharmacist Care of Older Persons Award and the Pride of Strathcona Award for her dedication to patients' well-being.

Ms. Biggs became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2007.

Diane Caleffi, Member

Calgary, Calgary and Area Region

Diane Caleffi began her career with the Calgary Police Service as an executive secretary in the Field Operations and Tactical Support sections and with Olympic Security for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games. She now runs her own business providing executive and personal assistant services.

She has served as a member of Executive Women International, as a safety officer for Calgary West Little League and as a volunteer with the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter Turning Points dinners.

Mrs. Caleffi became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2004.

Dr. Al Cook

Alberta's universities

Dr. Cook specializes in assistive device technology and is currently researching the use of robots to develop and reveal cognitive and language abilities in children who have severe disabilities.

He received his bachelor of science in electrical engineering at the University of Colorado and his masters in bioengineering, as well as his doctorate, from the University of Wyoming.

In addition to being associated with the Assistive Device Service at the Glenrose Hospital, Dr. Cook has served as co-director of the Assistive Device Center at California State University.

Dr. Cook is a professor in the department of speech pathology and audiology at the University of Alberta. He was dean of rehabilitation medicine from 1994 – 2007. Dr. Cook serves on several committees for Alberta Health and Wellness.

Dr. Cook became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2008.

Jean Dreger, Member

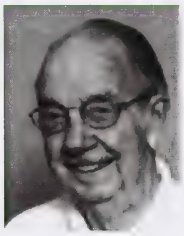
Calgary, Calgary and Area Region

Jean Dreger has worked with many boards and committees to serve seniors. She has been the chair of health and housing on the Mayor's Seniors Advisory Council and a board member for the Calgary Association of Gerontology.

She has volunteered with many other groups including the Canadian Association of Retired Persons advocacy committee and the Elder Friendly Group through the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work.

Ms. Dreger also wrote *A Voice for Seniors*, a column in the Calgary Herald, and she is a graduate of the Lutheran Hospital Ministry with a counseling certificate.

Ms. Dreger became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2004, and retired from council March 2009.



Clyde Elford, Member

Calgary, Calgary and Area Region

Clyde Elford has shared his time with many organizations. He has served as president of several clubs, including the Canukeena Club, Probus Club and Food Executive Club. He has also been a member of the Calgary Naval Veterans Association, Royal Canadian Legion, Kerby Centre, Red Cross and the Calgary White Hatter organization.

He worked with the 1988 Olympic Winter Games volunteer team and has used his public relations and marketing experience to assist organizations like the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology through its advisory board of marketing. Presently, he is a member of the Alberta Mental Health Review Panel.

Mr. Elford has been recognized for his service to the community with the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the Alberta Centennial Medal.

Mr. Elford became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2004, and retired from council March 2009.

Dr. Bill Forbes, Member

Stony Plain, Edmonton and Area Region

Dr. Bill Forbes has worked in a variety of positions with seniors. He has been a member of a regional health authority. He has been very involved with an education board, and through a variety of associations, he has met many older Albertans and understands their concerns.

Dr. Forbes has also served as president of three Canadian community colleges. In addition to his work with the council, he has volunteered with numerous community, provincial and national not-for-profit associations.

Dr. Forbes became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2004.

Beverly Homeniuk, Member

Willingdon, Edmonton and Area Region

Beverly Homeniuk has served on several boards, committees and organizations at district, regional and provincial levels in the Vegreville region.

She has also been an outreach worker with the Vegreville Health Unit, where she developed and implemented visiting programs for the elderly and homebound. Most recently, she served in an administrative position with the provincial government where a large part of her role involved providing support and assistance to seniors.

In 1998, Mrs. Homeniuk was awarded the Northeast 4-H Region Award of Distinction for volunteer leadership, and her family received the Edmonton Northlands/Alberta Motor Association Farm Family Award in 2001.

Mrs. Homeniuk became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2007.

Laurie Lyckman, Member

Carmangay, South Region

Laurie Lyckman is very familiar with issues important to seniors, their caregivers and families. Now the director of care for a seniors lodge, she is keenly interested in how best to improve the quality of life of seniors and how to help seniors understand the options and opportunities available to them.

Mrs. Lyckman also helps fundraise for several health foundations and has been an executive member of the Lodge Activity Coordinators Association of Alberta for 13 years.

In 2005, Mrs. Lyckman received an Alberta Centennial Medal for her contributions to the community.

Mrs. Lyckman became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2006.

Leonard Olson, Member

High Prairie, North West Region

Leonard Olson brings a diversity of experiences to the council. Originally from northern Alberta, he completed his post-secondary education in Edmonton before working with the provincial government and Northern Lakes College.

After retiring, Mr. Olson continued to serve on the High Prairie town council and started to work with Canada Post. He is currently in his fifth term with town council and his second term with the seniors council.

Mr. Olson became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2004, and retired September 2008.

Dawn Parent, Member

Lacombe, Central Region

Dawn Parent has worked with several organizations, boards and commissions. She has also been a Lacombe town councillor for the past 17 years and has served on the Lacombe Foundation board. Her work with the Seniors and Housing Authority Board and experience caring for aging parents sparked her interest in working with seniors.

After retiring from her account manager position with a national bank, Mrs. Parent entered the real estate sales business, where she continues to work. She is also a board member with the Persons with Development Disabilities Central Region and the Alberta College of Medical Lab Technologists.

Mrs. Parent became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2005.

Harjit S. Rai, Member

Calgary, Calgary and Area Region

Harjit Rai is especially interested in assisting elderly people and believes seniors can be active and healthy community members.

Mr. Rai is also a strong supporter of cross-cultural relations. He served as a director for the Calgary Multicultural Centre and as president of the Sikh Society of Calgary. He remains actively involved with Calgary's Sikh Society and the Deshmesh Culture Centre.

Born and raised in India, Mr. Rai has worked in general insurance, life insurance and real estate fields. He has been a real estate broker in Calgary for more than 20 years.

Mr. Rai received an Alberta Centennial Medal for his commitment to the community.

Mr. Rai became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2006.

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SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

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Government of Alberta